

Note to Sea Grant Advisory Board Members Concerning the Report of the Research Committee

The Executive Summary of the draft report of the Research Committee is presented in the following section. It gives a summary of the conclusions and recommendations reached by the committee. The charge to the committee is given below, and the report itself is organized around responses to the 6 parts of the charge.

I draw your attention in particular to the first roughly two and a half pages of the Executive Summary and to the first recommendation there. The committee recognized early in its deliberations that issues related to research support in Sea Grant are intimately related to the overall funding of Sea Grant. That in turn is related to the perception of Sea Grant within NOAA, Congress, and the Office of Management and Budget, as revealed by a series of questionnaires and personal meetings with individuals in these and related groups. We believe that until these organizations are convinced that Sea Grant is a strong national program addressing a small number of clearly defined national needs in the coastal environment, funding for Sea Grant and its research will never reach its potential and will likely slowly continue to decline. We believe that some fundamental alterations in how Sea Grant operates will be needed to change these perceptions

The remainder of the Executive Summary, and the report itself, addresses several ways in which Sea Grant's research efforts can be enhanced in the future, including maximizing the value and quality of its research, providing guidelines for the future fraction of funding devoted to research, the evaluation of future research, expanding the research portfolio, and ensuring future research is consistent with Sea Grant's strategic plan. We expect to have a "final" draft of the report sent to you electronically a few days before the meeting in Seattle. During my presentation in Seattle I will provide a detailed summary of the report.

Charge to the National Sea Grant Advisory Board Committee to Review Sea Grant Research

- 1) What are the long-term implications of the decrease in Sea Grant research funding? Has the decline been across the board, or has it affected some programs or some programmatic areas more than others?
- 2) What are the reasons for this decline? What is the perceived impact and value of Sea Grant research relative to research in other NOAA programs, and what effect has this had on the decline in Sea Grant Research funding? In what way should the Sea Grant research portfolio complement, and be distinguished from, NOAA's portfolio, and with the portfolios of other coastal and marine funding agencies?
- 3) What can Programs do to maximize the value of their research effort and support the best university scientists? What can Directors do to engage the best talent? Is there a role for the National Office in this effort? What are the manpower implications of actually managing an effective research effort, both for the Programs, and for the National Office?
- 4) Is the continuation of the percentage guidelines for funding devoted to research still warranted? If so, should the percentage directed toward research vary between large or small Programs? What is the appropriate balance between research and outreach?

5) On what basis should research performance within the Sea Grant Program be evaluated and measured in the future? Should state and other research support for individual Sea Grant Programs be considered when evaluating the overall research effort?

6) Can the decline in research funding be reversed? If so, how? What pathways can be explored to expand a Program's research portfolio?

Bob Duce, Chair, Research Committee